



## State of North Carolina Office of the Governor

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### **GOV. EASLEY ANNOUNCES N.C. EARNS 2<sup>nd</sup> AMERICAN VITICULTURE AREA DESIGNATION** *Wineries In Swan Creek Area Of Wilkes, Yadkin and Iredell Counties Join Yadkin Valley For Prestigious Title*

**RALEIGH** – Gov. Mike Easley today announced that the Swan Creek area, about 160 square miles that includes portions of Wilkes, Yadkin and Iredell counties, became North Carolina's second "American Viticulture Area." The designation, which is bestowed by the U.S. Treasury Department's Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, allows consumers to better identify the regions where the wines they purchase are produced and vintners to better describe the origin of their wines. The Yadkin Valley was the first region in the state to earn the designation in 2003.

"This second designation is the obvious result of the growing prestige, and of course the quality, of our wine industry," said Easley. "As the number of wineries in our state and their reputations for excellence grow, we expect more and more consumers will look for wines that carry labels from one of our 'American Viticulture Areas.'"

To receive the designation from the federal agency, applicants must show that the wines produced in the region exhibit factors that differentiate them from wines grown elsewhere. Some of the distinctions specific to the Swan Creek area include:

- The region averages 1,000- to 2,000-foot elevations providing more moderate temperatures and optimum precipitation levels most suited for the area's predominant *vinifera* grapes.
- The rocky, loamy soil is loaded with minerals that contribute a unique flavor to the wines as well as provide excellent soil drainage.
- The Swan Creek area receives, on average, less precipitation than surrounding areas which gives grapes grown in the region a better chance to ripen and avoid rot and disease.
- Swan Creek receives continuous breezes from the north and west which are beneficial for grape growing.

There are currently five vineyards located within the Swan Creek American Viticulture Area; Raffaldini Vineyards in Ronda along with Laurel Gray Vineyards, Buck Shoals Vineyards, Shadow Springs Vineyard and Dobbins Creek Vineyards in Hamptonville. Several types of *vinifera* grapes are grown within the Swan Creek American Viticulture Area, including many traditional and unique French and Italian varieties not widely available in the U.S.

Easley visited Italy in April on an economic development mission that included meetings with some of that country's top vintners in Tuscany to see how they have successfully merged tradition and technology.

There are more than 180 regions designated as American Viticulture Areas in the United States with more than 100 located in California, the nation's largest wine producer. North Carolina is gaining national recognition in the industry as the number of wineries in the state grows and the wines they produce continue to earn accolades.